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Author(s): Masujiro Honda

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AMERICAN AND JAPANESE DIPLOMACY IN CHINA

*By Masujiro Honda, D. Litt, Tokyo, Japan; Recently Editor
of "The Oriental Review"*

From geographic and other causes, the United States of America has been comparatively independent, both politically and commercially, of the continents other than its own. This fact has enabled the Washington government occasionally to project unconventional ideas and principles into the arena of international dealings. While American diplomacy, therefore, may be a source of irritation to some nations, to others it may prove a cause for thankfulness. Whatever the result, American diplomacy bears a distinct stamp of its own, and does credit to the country of great ideals. Only when it is actuated by self-interest does this attitude defeat its own purposes and alienate the sympathy and respect of other nations.

Japan's relations with China are as vital as those of England with the continent of Europe. Tokyo diplomacy can neither be purely academic, nor ignore the claims and sentiments of the four hundred million co-racials. Just as the British Empire would be threatened by the rise of a continental rival, so Japan's safety demands that no one of her three great neighbors, Russia, China, or America, should obtain an undue share of influence in the Far East. Moreover, the fact that European powers have vested interests more firmly planted in China than has America, requires Japan to be more or less on the side of the former when Chinese problems are to be internationally settled.

Besides this fundamental difference between American and

Japanese diplomacy in China, there is another point of divergence which makes the lack of understanding more apparent than real. In the democratic country with the Monroe doctrine theoretically accepted, international dealings have naturally to be guided by popular desires and to administer to private interests. Even such a disinterested act as that of returning to China the over-received part of the Boxer indemnity was made an occasion for educating Chinese youths in American colleges, which, it was claimed, would eventually further the trade, as well as foster the friendship, between the two peoples. American diplomacy is, in this way, more a matter of home politics than an international affair, as some shrewd critics have asserted with regard to the Panama Canal toll question, the Jewish passport case, and the withdrawal from the six-power loan group. Japanese diplomacy, on the contrary, has been characterised by a bureaucratic secrecy, and a tendency to take the people into its confidence after the inevitable had been accepted. This was notably the case with the terms of the Portsmouth peace treaty and the so-called "gentlemen's agreement" to restrict Japanese immigrants to America. In fact, a few years ago an English journalist advised the Japanese neither to apologise or explain, but to carry on their plans silently and tenaciously, for the reason that the outside world would be sure to suspect, criticize, or even incriminate whatever they did, as a result of the important position which Japan had then attained in world politics. Hence, the more need of frankly telling the American public what the Japanese have seen and felt concerning America's policies in China.

The primary object of Commodore Perry's visits to Japan, sixty years ago, was to prepare an approach, an entrance to Chinese trade, which in those days was a goal of general European rivalry. This successfully accomplished, about thirty years later, General U. S. Grant, ex-President of the United States, cautioned Japan and China against the danger of becoming a common prey to foreign aggressors, which, he said, would be the result, if the two Asiatic peoples were not banded together for mutual protection. As late as the

close of the Russo-Japanese war, there had been no single sign of conflict between American and Japanese diplomacy over the Chinese situation. As soon, however, as Japan inherited a part of the Russian lease of the Manchurian railway zone, a lease which does not expire until 1938, an anti-Japanese campaign was systematically inaugurated by the occidental press, which, in a more or less disguised form, the Washington government seemed to support. Beginning with the far-famed Rooseveltian pronouncement that "America must dominate the Pacific;" Taft's (then secretary of war) speech at Shanghai in 1907, which laid stress on the application of the open-door principle to the entire territories of China; Secretary of State Knox's proposal to neutralize the Manchurian railways by four powers, without consulting the wishes of the lawful owners of these railways; American support of a scheme to construct a new line of railway which would greatly reduce the usefulness of the Russo-Japanese line if the scheme was carried through; the newspaper agitation against the alleged Japanese rebate in Manchuria; the prominent part played by an American financier in the organization of the four-power group for Chinese loans, into which Russia and Japan were afterwards admitted with some difficulty; the recent withdrawal of the United States from the six-power group; and the independent recognition of the Chinese Republic by the Washington government in the face of an agreement among leading powers to act in unison in this matter—all these happenings seem to indicate that American diplomacy attaches more importance to China's welfare than to the interests and sympathies of other nations. Whether this attitude is attributable to a noble aspiration to help an under-dog, or to a practical desire for commercial expansion, its historical development, independently of its psychological value, is well worth our notice.

The traditional foreign policy of China was to set one strong nation to check another. It was in accordance with this principle that a triple European interference was invited at the close of her conflict with Japan. Again in the Russo-Japanese war, China hoped for a chance of recovering her

lost rights in Manchuria without fighting. Should this plan fail, the late Li Hung Chang's shrewdness foresaw the possibility of driving out the two aggressors by means of the influence of the United States. This idea is referred to in his interesting diary while being welcomed in America on his way home from Europe. Washington diplomacy, on the other hand, readily embraced the opportunity of removing the offence it had given to China through the exclusion act, and of improving American trade with her vast population through various means of befriending China or of thwarting other powers. The gallant American now found an upper-dog in Japan, who had been an under-dog with regard to China and Russia. Hence the inevitable result of America and Japan becoming at cross purposes over China's affairs.

American diplomacy has ever been welcome and successful where the abstract principles of humanity and justice are concerned, and when it has been free from the bare suspicion of self-seeking. This was notably the case in the timely declaration of the open-door policy in China and her territorial integrity—as also in inviting Russia and Japan to come to terms after their sanguinary struggle. In matters touching the practical interests of other peoples, however, American diplomacy would seem sometimes to put other nations into an attitude of mutual sympathy and common defense, and to weaken their respect toward the Monroe doctrine. For it is on the implicit understanding of America's non-interference with other continents that the continental republic is left free of outside interference. But the United States of America has now secured the necessary stepping stones (the Hawaiian Islands, Guam and the Philippines), across the Pacific Ocean to reach China and claim a due share of influence over her destinies. It is impossible to reconcile two such contradictory measures. In order to make its position tenable in world politics, American diplomacy must needs choose between the horns of an awkward dilemma. It must either sacrifice the Monroe doctrine, or restrict its application within a much smaller sphere of influence, or return to its traditional avoidance of foreign

entanglement by staying on the high plane of international morality.

Whichever general course America may eventually decide to take, it is evident to candid observers that America will not antagonize other powers out of a Platonic affection for China, that China realizes no nation but herself can work out her own salvation, and that Japan must be friendly with the teeming millions of China for commercial and other reasons. It would also be to China's advantage to utilize, at least for the present, the political and military supremacy of Japan in the Far East, as it would be Japan's wisdom to keep China always on her side. Commercial rivalry there is and will ever be, it is true; and some European or American business men, who have lost ground through German or Japanese competition in China, may continue to agitate against their rivals. But broad statesmanship discerns on the horizon unmistakable signs of a unanimous desire that all outside nations should coöperate for the peaceful consolidation of China's nationality, be it called a republic or a monarchical confederacy; and that, above all other things, America, China and Japan should work together for the preservation of tranquility on the shores washed by the Pacific waters. China with its dependencies is far more extensive in territory and far larger in population than the whole of Europe. Its social, political, economic, religious and racial differences may also be as great as those of Europe, or even greater. Its history is certainly much longer than that of Europe. It cannot, therefore, be through a recognition of this leader's republicanism, or that statesman's rule, or through the lending of money by a group of nations, or by private individuals singly, that the destiny of the four hundred million souls shall be guided from without. Each province, each dependency, each race of China is a problem by itself, which requires a life time's careful study. That person or nation who thoroughly understands China as a whole, not any one region or party, is alone entitled to a voice in the parliament of men for furthering the cause of China for the Chinese themselves.